

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
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INFO AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION BALTIMORE MARYLAND

UNCLAS BRIDGETOWN 2503

EO 11652: NA
TAGS: CFED
SUBJECT: SOCIAL SECURITY VALIDATION SURVEY

REF A-5654 AND BRIDGETOWN 2418 (NOTAL)

1. AS SUGGESTED IN BTN 2418, IT WOULD BE PREFERABLE THAT SSA SURVEY TEAM COMMENCE OPERATIONS IN BARBADOS. ASSUMING THAT, ONCE SURVEY IS COMPLETED ON THIS ISLAND, TEAM WOULD NOT NEED TO RETURN HERE, IT WOULD PROBABLY BE BEST THAT IT THEN GO TO GRENADA AND WORK ITS WAY NORTH TO BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS (BVI) AND THEN RETURN TO US. IF THIS IS PRACTICABLE, AIR TRAVEL BY LEEWARD ISLAND AIR TRANSPORT (LIAT) COULD BE SCHEDULED BY EMBASSY WHILE TEAM IS CARRYING OUT ITS WORK IN BARBADOS. IN EVENT OTHER MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION WILL ALSO HAVE TO BE USED, THIS TOO COULD BE WORKED OUT AT THAT TIME.

2. AIR TICKETS FOR TWO PERSONS FROM BARBADOS TO GRENADA AND THEN NORTH, ISLAND BY ISLAND, TO BVI WOULD COST APPROXIMATELY \$1200.00. THIS FIGURE WOULD HAVE TO BE INCREASED IF BOTH MEMBERS OF TEAM HAVE TO VISIT MORE THAN ONE ISLAND IN SOME OF THE GROUPS. FOR INSTNANCE, GRENADA ALSO HAS A DEPENDENT ISLAND OF CARRIACOU, ST. VINCENT HAS BEQUIA, ANTIGUA HAS BARBDUA, ST. KITTS HAS NEVIS AND THE BVI IS MADE UP OF SEVERAL ISLANDS. ALL THE MAIN ISLANDS (PLUS OTHERS
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MENTIONED IN BTN 2418) AND THE SMALLER DEPENDENT ISLANDS WILL HAVE SOCIAL SECURITY AND OTHER FEDERAL AGENCY BENEFICIARIES. ALL THE MAIN ISLANDS HAVE AIRPORTS BUT SOME OF THE SMALLER ONES WOULD HAVE TO BE REACHED BY BOAT. THE EMBASSY ESTIMATES THE ADDITIONAL COST OF AIR TRAVEL TO SMALLER ISLANDS WOULD BE ABOUT \$100.00. WE ARE UNABLE TO MAKE AN ACCURATE ESTIMATE OF COST

OF SEA TRANSPORTATION BUT BELIEVE THAT IT SHOULD NOT EXCEED ABOTHER \$100.00.

3. WHILE TEAM IS OPERATING IN BARBADOS, WE REGRET THAT WE ARE UNABLE TO PROVIDE CARS FROM OUR ALMOST NONEXISTENT CAR POOL OR IN ALL PROBABILITY OFFICE SPACE. THIS EMBASSY IS PRESENTLY GEARING UP TO HANDLE A GREATLY EXPANDED IMMIGRANT VISA OPERATION RESULTING FROM PASSAGE OF NEW IMMIGRATION LAW AND WE HAVE INSUFFICIENT SPACE AVAILABLE TO HOUSE THE CONSULAR SECTION. IF, HOWEVER, THE CONSULAR SECTION'S MOVE TO NEW QUARTERS COINCIDES WITH TIME THAT TEAM WILL BE IN BARBADOS, THERE WOULD BE SOME OFFICE SPACE AVAILABLE IN PRESENT CHANCERY WHERE TEAM COULD WORK. SINCE THIS IS PROBLEMATIC, HOWEVER, TEAM MUST BE PREPARED TO RENT OFFICE FACILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION AT EACH LOCATION VISITED. (OUR TRAVELLING VISA OFFICERS OFTEN HAVE TO RENT AN ADDITIONAL ROOM IN HOTELS THEY ARE STAYING AT IN OTHER ISLANDS TO USE AS OFFICE SPACE.) IF SECRETARIAL ASSISTANCE IS NEEDED, WE WILL TRY TO ARRANGE FOR THIS WHILE TEAM IS IN BARBADOS. AT THE OTHER LOCATIONS, THIS WOULD HAVE TO BE AT SSA EXPENSE. CLERICAL EMPLOYEES COULD PROBABLY BE HIRED AT ABOUT \$3.00 AN HOUR. IT WOULD PROBABLY BE BEST IF TEAM USED CHAUFFEUR DRIVEN CARS WHEN TRAVELLING ABOUT THE ISLANDS SINCE TRAFFIC MOVES ON THE LEFT AND IN SOME OF THE OTHER ISLANDS ESPECIALLY GRENADA AND DOMINICA, ROADS ARE VERY NARROW, OFTEN JUST DIRT TRACKS WINDING UP AND DOWN MOUNTAINS WITH SEVERE DROPS ON ONE SIDE OR OTHER. TAXI TRANSPORTATION WOULD PROBABLY BE BEST ON SOME OF THE SMALLER DEPENDENT ISLANDS. TEAM SHOULD BE PREPARED TO WALK TO SOME HOUSES WHICH MAY BE OFF THE BEATEN TRACK ON MOUNTAIN SIDES OR TOPS ETC.

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4. COST OF CHAUFFEUR DRIVEN CAR RENTALS IN BARBADOS IS \$125.00 A WEEK PLUS GASOLINE AT \$1.00 PER GALLON. CAR WITHOUT DRIVER IS \$100.00 A WEEK PLUS GASOLINE. IN OTHER ISLANDS, CAR RENTAL COSTS WOULD BE SIMILAR BUT GASOLINE WILL PROBABLY AVERAGE ABOUT \$1.25 PER GALLON.

5. ALL TEN GOVERNMENTS IN CONSULAR DISTRICT HAVE BEEN ASKED FOR PERMISSION FOR TEAM TO OPERATE IN THE VARIOUS ISLANDS. TO DATE, ONLY MONTSERRAT AND ST LUCIA HAVE REPLIED BY CABLE STATING THAT THEY HAVE NO OBJECTION TO SURVEY. IT IS NOT BELIEVED LIKELY THAT ANY OF THE GOVERNMENTS WILL INTERPOSE ANY OBJECTION TO THE VISIT SINCE THE MONTHLY TREASURY CHECKS RECEIVED BY BENEFICIARIES ASSIST THE LOCAL ECONOMY. DEPT WILL BE INFORMED WHEN ALL JURISDICTIONS HAVE RESPONDED TO OUR REQUEST.

6. WOULD GREATLY APPRECIATE RECEIVING DATES OF VISITS TO VARIOUS ISLANDS SOONEST SO THAT GOVERNMENTS CAN BE INFORMED

AND HOEL RESERVATIONS SOUGHT. AS MENTIONED IN BTN 2418,
TOURIST SEASON DOES NOT END UNTIL APRIL 15 AND SOME HOTELS
MAY ALREADY BE BOOKED RATHER HEAVILY IN ADVANCE. ONCE TOURIST
SEASON HAS ENDED HOTEL RESERVATIONS WILL BE EASIER TO OBTAIN
AND PRICES WILL BE SOMEWHAT LOWER.
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